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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON

July 15, 1959

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Chief, Geography Division,
Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT : Territorial and Sovereignty Problems in the Arctic

1. A comprehensive politico-geographic study of the Arctic Basin is needed. Much postwar military planning has been and is being centered on the Arctic, while on the political side questions of territorial claims and sovereignty status are far from clear cut. Although documentation in quantity exists on the Arctic as such, much of it treats only environmental and strategic phases, and is chiefly concerned with continental areas. World attention is focused on U.S. policy pertaining to problems in the Arctic Basin, and a study is needed which utilizes all pertinent material to clarify the political as well as environmental factors involved.

This Office strongly recommends that your Division undertake such a study. The matter has been coordinated informally with [REDACTED] ORR, D/GG (Office of Research and Reports, Division of Geography, Geography); and an outline prepared by him would not only provide essential background material for the formulation of U.S. policy in a critical area, but would help to facilitate the resolution of numerous legal problems anticipated as a result of expanding interests by a number of nations along the northern margins of the North American and Eurasian continents.

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2. We envision that the study should encompass the basic natural features of Arctic geography insofar as they relate to the main issues at hand; the implications of sector claims upon the territorial sea; under-ice freedom of the seas, with special reference to submarines capable of launching missiles; the territorial status of semi-permanent installations constructed on floating ice; and the generally increasing ability to cope with distance and an inhospitable climate by advancing technology.

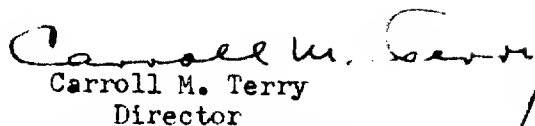
3. In addition to text, we envision graphics showing "sector claims" in the Arctic as well as the delimitation of the territorial sea and the orientation of sea and air routes.

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4. Both the Office of Soviet Affairs and the Office of the Legal Adviser have indicated interest and may wish to call attention to specific problems within their fields. The Office of the Geographer is particularly engaged in the question of territorial claims, on land and water, and stands ready to cooperate in any way possible to facilitate the proposed study.


Carroll M. Terry
Director
Office of Intelligence
Resources and Coordination

cc: IRC/G. - Dr. E. Pearcy
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